

currently we have no pattern, no guide, to holding a debate about how the Senate functions.

A second will be to consider the expedited consideration of most nominations. We made a rule change a couple of years ago—well, November a year ago. And also, before that, we made some minor changes in timing in January 2013. That came out of the debate just 2 years ago. Those January 2013 changes are expiring. Those timelines are expiring. So that goes away. Should those be adopted as part of the standing rules rather than simply the standing orders which expire with the change of a Congress?

A third idea is to end the filibuster on the motion to proceed to legislation. Think about how this has changed. If you take the 10-year period between 1973 and 1982, a 10-year period that embraces when I first came here as an intern, there were 14 times there was a filibuster on a motion to proceed. If you take 10 years from roughly 2003 to 2012, that number went up to about 160—more than a tenfold increase in the paralysis of getting bills to the floor to be discussed.

Why should there be filibusters at all on a conference committee? If the

House has put forward an idea and passed it, and the same bill has been passed by the Senate, isn't it common sense to enable a delegation from each Chamber to meet together to work out a compromise? We did make a modest improvement in this procedure, but there is much more work to be done on this.

In fact, I was mystified when I came here in 2009 as to why there weren't conference committees going on. First I heard: Well, it is easier for Chairs of committees to get together informally and try to work out something behind the scenes. But then, as I asked more questions, the answer became: Because there are three steps required, and all three of which enable a filibuster, and that paralysis just isn't worth entertaining the time on the floor. Well, let us restore conference committees. Let us get rid of filibusters on conference committees.

And certainly we must improve floor debate by ensuring amendments can be introduced and debated. The minority has said in recent years that this is a deep disadvantage to them. But I can tell you as a Member of the previous majority that it was a disadvantage to majority Members as well not to be

able to introduce and debate amendments.

We also certainly must replace the silent filibuster with the talking filibuster so there is transparency and accountability to the use of this instrument on final passage of a bill.

Let us not let this opportunity pass. Let us not continue on autopilot from one Congress to the next. Let us take this moment of opportunity to start on this path to restoring the U.S. Senate to being the world's greatest deliberative body in order to address the big issues before us and for the betterment of our Nation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M.
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate stands adjourned until 9:30 a.m. tomorrow, and does so as a further mark of respect to the memory of the late Senator Edward William Brooke, III, of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1:40 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, January 7, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.